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1981

Shopping Savvy

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Recommended Citation

South Dakota State University, Cooperative Extension, "Shopping Savvy" (1981). *SDSU Extension Fact Sheets*. 959.

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Website: extension.sdstate.edu

Phone: 605-688-4792

Email: sdsu.extension@sdstate.edu

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Shopping Savvy



Cooperative Extension Service
South Dakota State University
U.S. Department of Agriculture

SHOPPING SAVVY

Wise shopping at sales can save you money on your clothing budget. But you can lose money too.

So, to make the best use of your clothing dollars, it's important to know your clothing needs and how to evaluate sales merchandise before you venture out to spend your money.

Just remember that a sale is the retailer's way of increasing the flow of money into his or her store. This can be done in a variety of ways. But if you know what kind of sale the retailer is offering, you'll be better able to judge the value of the merchandise. It's important to know these sales differences.

CLEARANCE SALES

These sales are usually held to get rid of old merchandise and make way for new stock. They're often held at the end of a month, year or season, or before the store's inventory or closing-out.

Advantages:

- usually a 25 to 50 percent price reduction
- good buys in classic garments for future seasons

Limitations:

- selection of size, color, and style may be limited
- may be fad or high-fashion merchandise
- may be leftover or discontinued styles
- may be shopworn



SPECIAL PURCHASE SALES

These sales involve merchandise purchased by the store especially for the sale. Often, these items are not part of the store's regular stock.

Advantages:

- the store buys the merchandise at a good price and passes the savings along to consumers
- these sales occur frequently
- many sizes
- good for wardrobe staples, like blouses, sweaters, and slacks

Limitations:

- quality may vary from the store's regular merchandise
- price reductions are minor
- the original price is rarely given, so you can't always tell what you're saving
- many similar items

SEASONAL SALES

These sales are repeated yearly, like the white sales in January, winter coat and fur sales in August and January, and shoe sales in January and July.

Advantages:

- you can plan ahead to shop these sales
- especially good for staple items, like undergarments and household goods

Limitations:

- usually occur at the end of each fashion season
- may include only the least popular sizes and items

ANNUAL, REGULAR STOCK, OR DEPARTMENT MANAGER'S SALES

These tend to occur at about the same time each year. They generally offer regular merchandise at reduced cost. But once the sale ends, the items are returned to their original price.

Advantages:

- 10 to 15 percent price reduction

Limitations:

- selection of size, color, and style may be limited
- sale lasts for only a short period of time

STIMULATION SALES

These are held to encourage buying during slow periods. They're often called dollar days, crazy days, or "two-for-one" or anniversary sales. Often, regular stock is combined with special purchase items.

Advantages:

- price reductions are usually good

Limitations:

- merchandise may be shopworn
- may be fad or slow-selling items

OTHER PLACES FOR BARGAIN BUYS

When shopping for clothing, you needn't limit yourself to retail sales. There are other places where you can find bargain buys, such as:

FACTORY OUTLETS

You can often find low-priced, fashionable items at factory outlet stores. But the merchandise may vary in quality, so make sure you understand how it's classified:

"Samples"

- may have been used as examples by sales representatives
- may be shopworn
- usually small sizes

"Irregulars"

- contain flaws which may or may not be visible to you but which could affect the garment's life or appearance

"Seconds"

- usually have flaws which can be seen but will not affect the garment's use

"Surpluses"

- end-of-the-season and leftover items

DISCOUNT STORES

Here's where your ability to evaluate fabric and quality of garment construction can really pay off. Discount stores offer low-priced merchandise and a variety of sales, so you can get excellent buys if you shop selectively.

GARAGE SALES AND THRIFT SHOPS

Usually you can find low-priced merchandise here, but the sizes and styles may be limited. Finding what you need may take hours of your time in trips from place to place.

Sizes may not be identified, so take along a measuring tape with a list of measurements for

different family members. That way, you can size up the garments yourself.

Care labels may not be available either, so the risk is yours if you should happen to damage the garment through improper care.

Some of the garments may need a little attention to improve their appearance or alter them for proper fit.

These sales serve as a good source for buttons, trim and fabric for sewing projects.

BEFORE BUYING AT ANY SALE

Ask yourself —

- Can the item be used now or must you wait until next season or next year?
- Will it still fit when you're ready to wear it?
- Will it still be in fashion next year?
- Are you willing to have your money tied up in a garment that can't be immediately worn?
- Does it fit you now?
- Does it fit into your present wardrobe, or will you have to buy something to wear with it?
- Are you satisfied with the garment's quality?
- Is the item in need of repair, cleaning, or alterations?
- Will you invest the time and/or money necessary to prepare the garment for wearing?
- If special care is required, will you devote the time or spend the money needed for laundering or cleaning?

For more information contact Linda Manikowske, Extension clothing and textiles specialist. Prepared by Rae Reilly and Jacquelyn Yep and reprinted with permission of Iowa Cooperative Extension Service. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with USDA, Hollis D. Hall, Director of CES, SDSU, Brookings, Education programs and materials offered without regard to age, race, color, religion, sex, handicap, or national origin. An Equal Opportunity Employer.
File: 13.1—5,000 printed at estimated 4 cents each—10-81mb—258.

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